



NEWSLETTER



Big Horn County
FSA Office
February, 2011

County Executive

Director: Keshia Lind

724 West Third St.
Hardin, MT 59034

406-665-3442 phone
406-665-3916 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

County Committee

Members:

Shawn Nedens: Chair
Ellis Murdock: ViceChair
Shawn Fredericks
Carrie Holmen: Advis
Thomas Whiteman: Advis

Next County Committee Meeting:

March 2, 2011

County Office Staff:

Katie Berkram
Jill Uffelman
Marie Weibert
Diane Schanaman

Agricultural Lending Opportunities

Questions regarding obtaining credit to start or enlarge a farming or ranching operation; financing agricultural operating expenses; or livestock, machinery purchases call:

Mike Turley: 657-6135
Bruce Johnson: 657-6135

Reasonable Accommodations:

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any FSA programs should contact the County Executive Director at the FSA Office or the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

Heads Up

- **January 10th-** SURE (Crop Disaster) signup starts. Come into the office and fill out an application for payment before July 29, 2011 deadline.
- **February 1-28th**- USDA will conduct a referendum on the Sorghum Checkoff Program at local FSA offices. Ballots may be obtained in person, by mail or facsimile at county FSA offices, or via the Internet.
- **March 14th-** Start of the General Signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Come into the FSA Office before April 15, 2011 and file an application.
- **March 15th**- Last day to sign-up for the Non-Insurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).
- **DCP-** DCP contracts will be mailed out starting in February. Review the shares that are shown on the contract for each person involved. If corrections need to be made please contact the County Office.
- **Leases-** If you had leases that expired in 2010, please bring current leases into the County Office. Remember payments cannot be made until all current leases are on file
- **Note for Disaster Programs:** We understand that it is time consuming to gather and document the information that is required for the Disaster programs, however without this information payments cannot be made. If you have question or concerns about the Disaster programs please contact the Big Horn County Office.

Congratulations to **Shawn Fredericks!** Shawn was re-elected to represent farmers and ranchers from Local Administrative Area 3. Shawn was elected to his 3rd consecutive term. FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

CRP General Signup Announced for March 14 to April 15, 2011

General signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will begin on March 14, 2011, and continue through April 15, 2011. During the signup period, Montana farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup at their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

Through the 2008 Farm Bill, CRP is authorized for a maximum enrollment of 32 million acres. USDA estimates that contracts on 3.3 million to 6.5 million acres are scheduled to expire annually between now and 2014. Land currently not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this signup provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this signup are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2011. In Montana, 2.9 million acres of the state's 18,721,501 cropland acres are currently actively enrolled in the CRP program. Of the state's active CRP acres; 498,661 acres are scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2011; 696,523 acres on Sept. 30, 2012 and 638,841 acres on Sept. 30, 2013.

As administrator of the Conservation Reserve Program, FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that assists in calculating the environmental benefits to be gained from the contract. The EBI consists of five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring benefits). Cost factors are also entered into the equation.

In addition to the general sign-up, FSA's CRP Continuous Sign-up Program is ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov and view *Conservation Programs*.

Conservation Loan Program

The Conservation Loan (CL) Program provides farmers with the funds to implement conservation measures on their land. The available limit for a direct CL is \$300,000, and the limit for a guaranteed CL is \$1,119,000.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will work with applicants to develop a conservation plan containing approved conservation practices. Examples of some conservation practices are: water conservation structures, forest cover, permanent pastures, manure digesters and other installations.

For more information on a potential Conservation Loan, call the local FSA office and make an appointment with a loan officer.

USDA Sorghum Checkoff Referendum Scheduled

USDA will conduct a referendum on the Sorghum Checkoff Program Feb. 1-28, 2011, at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. Ballots may be obtained in person, by mail or facsimile at county FSA offices, or via the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/sorghumpage. For the program to continue, the Sorghum Promotion, Research, and Information Order requires that a referendum be conducted no later than 3 years after the start of assessments, which began on July 1, 2008. The order requires a simple majority vote in the referendum for the program to continue.

Any eligible person engaged in the production and sale of sorghum or the importation of sorghum from July 1, 2008, to December 31, 2010, is eligible to participate. Individuals are required to provide documentation such as a sales receipt or remittance form that shows they engaged in the production and sale of sorghum or the importation of sorghum.

The Sorghum Checkoff Program is funded at the rate of 0.6 percent of the net market value on grain sorghum and 0.35 percent of the net market value of sorghum forage. The Sorghum Checkoff is a national, coordinated, self-help marketing program designed to strengthen the position of sorghum in the market place, maintain and expand existing domestic and foreign markets and uses for sorghum, and develop new markets and uses for sorghum.



Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

FSA's Farm Storage and Facility Loan (FSFL) Program provides low-interest financing for producers of eligible commodities to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing a loan for the remaining eighty five (85) percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of seven, ten, or twelve years are available depending on the amount of the loan.

Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. A partial disbursement of up to 50 percent of the total loan amount will be available, if desired, after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final disbursement will be made when all construction is completed.

An FSFL generally must be approved before the delivery of any materials are accepted and before any site preparation or construction is begun. The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans: corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley, or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain; corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats, or barley harvested as other than whole grain; hay; renewable biomass; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables—cold storage facilities. Among other requirements, borrowers are responsible for obtaining annual multi-peril crop insurance or NAP coverage and all-peril insurance on the FSFL structure listing CCC as the loss payee. For more information, contact the county FSA office.

1099-G is in the Mail

Producers who have received payments from FSA are also receiving a CCC-1099-G in the mail. A CCC-1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service regarding FSA payments made to producers during the previous calendar year. The CCC-1099-G is a service to help participating producers report taxable income.

When the CCC-1099-G is received, it should be checked with your records to see that the amounts are correct. It is not intended to replace the program participant's responsibility to report income to the IRS.

ATTENTION: Refunds are no longer reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries (FSA-FI) web-based database.

Program participants with an eAuthentication user ID and password may access their refund information at FSA-FI and select "Inquiry Type 1099/Refund Reports". Refund amounts are displayed on the Producer's Year-to-Date Activity web page.

If you have a question concerning the 1099-G refund information, you may contact your local FSA office for assistance locating the correct payment

NAP coverage deadlines for 2011 Crop Year

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to provide financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields or prevented planting occurs as the result of natural disasters. Statutes limit NAP coverage to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity (except livestock), for which the catastrophic (CAT) level of insurance is not available.

The application and sales closing deadline for 2011 NAP coverage is **March 15, 2011**, for all NAP crops other than value loss and honey. The deadline for value-loss crops was Sept. 1, 2010 and Dec. 1, 2010, for honey.

Producers who choose to obtain NAP coverage for 2011 must file a CCC-471 application for coverage and pay the applicable service fee by the sales closing deadline. Eligible producers must pay a service fee of \$250 per crop per administrative county or \$750 per producer per county, not to exceed \$1875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Service fees may be waived for limited-resource producers.

For the 2011 crop year it is imperative that producers purchase either NAP or a catastrophic (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable and non-insurable crops. This is not only for production coverage, but also for eligibility for the new permanent disaster programs created in the 2008 Farm Bill.

In order for producers to be eligible for assistance under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), producers must obtain a plan of insurance for each insurable and non-insurable commodity on the farm, **excluding grazing**. To be eligible for assistance under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), producers must obtain either coverage under the Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Rainfall Index pilot Program offered through crop insurance, or NAP coverage, or both on their grazing.

Big Horn County FSA
724 West 3rd St.
Hardin, MT 59034



**PRESORTED
STANDARD U.S.
POSTAGE PAID
Bozeman, MT 59715
PERMIT #54**

Selected Interest Rates -February 2011	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.750%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Conservation Loan	4.750%
Emergency - Actual Loss	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility - 7-year	%
Farm Storage Facility - 10-year	%
Farm Storage Facility - 12-year	%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	%
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%

Upcoming Important Dates to Remember:

Oct. 1, 2010: 2011 DCP Sign-up Began & Continues
Oct. 1, 2010: 2011 ACRE Sign-up Began & Continues
Jan. 10, 2011: SURE Program Signup for 2009 Crop Year Begins
Feb. 1: Sorghum Referendum begins
Feb. 21: USDA Service Centers closed for President's Day
Feb. 28: Last day to vote in Sorghum Referendum
March 14: CRP General Signup Begins
March 15: NAP Sales Closing Date for All Other Crops except Value-Loss and Honey
March 31: Final Date to Request 2010 Marketing Assistance Loans/LDPs on Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat, and Sesame Seed
April 15: CRP General Signup Ends
May 31: Final Date to Request 2010 Marketing Assistance Loans/LDPs on Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, and Sunflower Seed
June 1: 2011 DCP & 2011 ACRE Programs Filing Deadline
July 29: SURE Sign-up Deadline for 2009 Crop Year
Continues: Contiguous Conservation Reserve Program

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